

It's Smart To Be Gallery Wise!

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

NEWS FLASHES

February 1,

1937

EXHIBITION OF FLOWER PAINTINGS: Opening on Sunday, January 31 and continuing through the month of February, the south and central loan galleries will be installed with a group of Flower Paintings by contemporary American artists. Although slightly in advance of the flower season here in Kansas City, the exhibition has been arranged to coincide with the Better Homes Show which this year will feature gardens and flower arrangements.

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The exhibition, which is a traveling one, will be augmented by examples from the Gallery and from private collections in the city. Miss Frances M. Logan will lend her Composition of Peonies by Eugene Speicher. It is a subtle arrangement of white and rose flowers against a green background and shows the artist at his best. Also from Miss Logan will come a beautiful Azeleas by André, perhaps the masterpiece of flower painting by that artist. From Mrs. Edgar L. Berkley will be included a Cherry Blossoms by Georgia O'Keefe, one of the most individual woman painters in American today, and whose superbly stylized flower studies are far more than mere decoration. The permanent collection will be represented by Sumac, by Clarence Carter, the young Cleveland artist who is just now achieving marked success in New York exhibitions. In the gay colours of the national emblem, he has placed the flowers in an amusing white vase of Victorian flavor, contrasted with the vibrant blue of the table cover.

Among the other artists to be included are Leopold Seyfert who will be represented by The Autumn Flowers and Russell Cheney who contributes Calla Lillies. That ever interesting young painter, Luigi Lucioni, who is almost more photographic and real than life itself and who is represented in the Gallery collection by a fine landscape of his native Italy, has one of his very competent arrangements, By the Windowsill in the group. H. Dudley Murphy, who is equally at home in flower pieces of landscapes, will be represented by four canvases, and Maud Mason, again one of our leading woman painters, by five studies. Other artists to be included are May Fairchild, Carle Blenner, Mary Hibbard, Arthur Woeffle, Elizabeth Price, and Gerald Leake.

TWENTIETH CENTURY DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLOURS: Of equal importance will be a group of twentieth century drawings and watercolours from the permanent collections and augmented by loans privately owned in the city, which will be hung in Gallery XIX. The exhibition will cover a wide range and will not be restricted to any one country.

Among the watercolours will be Robinhood Cove by William Zorach, just presented to the Friends of Art by Mrs. Gerald Parker, Woodstock Barn by Nicolai Cikovsky also a presentation by Mr. and Mrs. D. L. James, The Stallion and Jack, Midway Show, lent by Mr. and Mrs. James, and The Flying Cadonas, lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bennet Schneider, all by John Steuart Curry, Kentucky Pastoral by Clarence Carter, and a Beach Scene by Russell Flint lent by Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Fowler.

A number of the drawings will be seen for the first time, including a pencil Nude by Modigliani, two pen drawings by Forain, My Father by Heliker, a pen drawing Composition of Nudes by Federico Castellon, the young American artist whose work was featured in the recent Surrealist exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, several Rivera drawings lent by Mrs. Gertrude Lighton, and a fine pencil study of Melancholy lent by Miss Helen English and by a young French artist now studying at the French Academy in Rome.

As many of the watercolours and drawings come from private collections, the exhibition will be a most interesting one as an indication of the art that is appealing to the collecting public.

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MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: For February, Cranbury Lake, the landscape by the American artist, Nicolai Cikovsky, which has just been purchased and presented by The Friends of Art, will be featured as the Masterpiece. Painted during a recent visit to Southern Wisconsin and Minnesota, it is a sensitive transcript of the charm of the lake country of the Middle West, and its idyllic beauty and fresh colour will make it an instant and lasting favorite.

Cikovsky was born in Poland but has lived in America for the past fifteen years and last year was appointed painting instructor at the Academy of Art at Cincinnati. His canvases are purely American in feeling and approach, and many critics acclaim him the finest landscape painter we have today. He has won many prizes and his works hang in all the important galleries in the United States.

Cranbury Lake is a thoughtfully composed and successfully achieved landscape. His sensitive artist eye has been attracted by a scene that is in every way familiar, but in presenting it, he has conveyed to us his selective and heightening talent and has extended the range of our enjoyment of our own beautiful countryside. His problem was that of contrasting a foreground with a bank scarred by man in the construction of a new road, with the clam vista of rolling hills, noble trees, and a land-locked lake, all untouched by civilization. He has been immensely successful and has given us the breadth and air of the out-of-doors, the soft new greens of spring, the more sonorous greens of the pines and bluish distances and the cool, aquamarine of a shallow glacier lake.

The Gallery extends its gratitude and appreciation to the members of the Friends of Art for this superb and completely satisfying example of American landscape painting.

ITALIAN DRAWINGS: Gallery XIII has been installed with a group of Italian drawings from the permanent collection. Included with our fine examples by Perugino, Veronese, Palma Giovani, Guercino, Piazzetta and Tiepolo will be a new acquisition, a pen drawing of a Standing Nude by Baccio Bandinelli, the great sculptor and contemporary of Michael Angelo. It comes from the Oppenheim Collection and was secured in London this fall by the Director at the auction of that last of the important English privately owned groups of studies by the Old Masters. The drawing, very apparently a study for a sculpture, shows a standing man turned slightly to the right in the contraposto that Bandinelli borrowed from Michael Angelo and with his both hands resting on a ledge. At the bottom of the page is a superbly drawn arm, with the very characteristic shading of parallel lines used by draughtsmen of the sixteenth century.

PRINTS: The fine and very comprehensive group of engravings by the English print maker, Robert Austin, sponsored by the Print Club, will continue until February 15th. In his approach to engraving, Austin tends to revert to the simplicity and the accent on line of the great masters of the early 16th century. With his infinite capacity for taking pains, he has achieved a series of plates that are almost austere in their beauty. This exhibition offers the first opportunity to study every phase of his work, and will be of great interest to every print lover.

Following the Austins, the print galleries will be hung with a large group of lithographs by Daumier. Any exhibition by this great master of caricature and satire is certain to create interest. He combined a very real yet kindly sense of humour with a searching insight into the weakness and avariciousness of some classes of society and with great courage preached his sermons on stone against them. Produced in the middle fifty years of the 19th century, his lithographs are timeless; the foibles and the wrongs that he exposed are still with us today and his denouncements are still valid.

LECTURES: On Wednesday Evening, February 3rd, the Director will continue his series of the history of the decorative arts and will discuss the period of Louis XIV, the Regency, and Louis XV in France. This most interesting phase which encompasses the Baroque and highly formalized furniture of Versailles and the Roi Soleil takes us also into the beginning of the 18th century and the great change in fashion and the arts that took place at the death of Louis XIV.

The following Wednesday Evening, February 10th, Mr. Wittmann

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will lecture on the History of Flower Painting, a consideration of which will make the loan exhibition of the month more enjoyable. Flowers were often included as accessories in religious paintings of the Renaissance period, but it was not until the seventeenth century that artists turned to them alone for inspiration. In the eighteenth century they were again treated merely as accessories, but the superb representations of them by such artists as Courbet, Manet, Renoir, Cezanne, and Monet focused attention on them as subject matter and today there are few artists who do not devote some of their talents to the painting of flowers.

The next lecture in the series of the decorative arts will come on Wednesday Evening, the 17th, when the Director will discuss the periods of Louis XVI, the Directory and the Empire. It encompasses a fascinating fifty years which saw France turn from the frivolity of the days of MMe. de Pompadour to the austerity of Greece and ended in formalized imitation of Imperial Rome through the encouragement and ambitions of Napoleon.

Another lecture in the series will be given on Wednesday Evening, the 24th, when Miss Jackson will consider later textiles, particularly those of the 17th and 18th centuries. Modes had changed, and they were reflected in the silks and brocades of the period. Again the examples of the day from the permanent collection will be augmented by modern copies.

CHINESE IMPERIAL ROBES AND INSIGNIA: During the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties in China (fourteenth to early twentieth century), the nine ranks of civil and nine ranks of military officials were designated by square insignia worn one on the front and one on the back of the official costumes. These insignia were done in every technique known to the Chinese - brocade, all forms of embroidery, and that marvelously fine tapestry weave called "k'o-ssu". A great collection of these so-called Mandarin squares, embracing some four hundred examples, was made by Mrs. Julia St. Clair Krenz, formerly of Kansas City and now living in Peking. Mrs. Krenz has kindly lent her collection to the Gallery, and taking advantage of this opportunity, a selection of the best and most unusual of these squares will be shown in Gallery XXIV during the month of February. The exhibition will be augmented by some of the finest official and imperial court costumes from the permanent collection. It will be of especial interest and will be the most comprehensive display of Chinese textile techniques which the Gallery has shown.

FRIENDS OF ART: The second year of the activities of the Friends of Art has just closed with the purchase of Cranbury Lake by Nicolai Cikovsky, announced above. Two gifts were presented to the Gallery through the Society, Robinhood Cove, a watercolour by William Zorach presented by Mrs. Gerald Parker, and Woodstock Barn, a gouache by Cikovsky from Mr. and Mrs. D. L. James.

The study classes on the first and second Wednesday of each month under the leadership of the Director are continuing and it is hoped that all members will avail themselves of this opportunity to study all phases of modern art.

AFTERNOON LECTURES: The afternoon lectures on various phases of the permanent collection have, for the time being, been withdrawn. In their place, it is the desire of the Gallery to form groups who will come regularly to study different fields of the collection. The services of the Staff and of material in storage will be available for this, and courses can be arranged, suggested, or conducted. There is no charge for this service, other than the admission fee, as such work could be attempted only on week days. Any organized group of new groups which might be formed can secure information on these study classes by calling the Secretary.

GIFTS: The Gallery is very happy to announce the gift of a sum of money from Mr. J. Harry Lewis to be used for the purchase of books on contemporary art. This will be of great assistance in carrying on the work of the loan exhibitions, the educational department, and the study classes with the Friends of Art. It is hoped that other donors will contribute to this important activity of the Gallery.

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STAFF ACTIVITIES: The Registrar, Mr. Wittmann, is spending two weeks in New York where he is visiting museums and the current art exhibitions.

The Director will be the guest speaker at the Kansas City Art Teachers Convention in Emporia on February 6th, when he will give a talk on contemporary art. On February 18th he will go to Kansas State College at Manhattan to lecture on the Gallery and on contemporary American painting.

CALENDAR FOR MONTH OF FEBRUARY:

Wed., Feb. 3, 11:00 - Friends of Art Study Class - Library
 " " 3, 8:00 - Louis XIV, Regency, and Louis XV
 Styles in France - Mr. Gardner
 Wed., " 10, 8:00 - History of Flower Painting - Mr. Wittmann
 " " 17, 11:00 - Friends of Art Study Class - Library
 " " 17, 8:00 - Louis XVI, Directoire and
 Empire Styles - Mr. Gardner
 Sun., " 21, 3:30 - Concert by Sigma Alpha Iota
 Wed., " 24 - 8:00 - European Textiles of the 17th
 and 18th Centuries - Miss Jackson

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